

EXHIBIT 3
DATE 1-25-07
HB AGING / APS

Madame Chairperson and members of the committee,

For the record, my name is Sylvia Danforth and I live in Miles City. I'm the Executive Director of DEAP, a nonprofit agency providing a variety of family education and support services to individuals with special needs and their families in eastern Montana. One of the services most valued by families is caregiver relief provided through respite care. In February of 2006, DEAP was awarded one of 4 demonstration grants from Senior and Long Term Care through an Alzheimer's disease Demonstration Grants to coordinate and increase respite services to caregivers residing in frontier and rural areas and to build in mechanisms for caregivers to cost share in order to increase the sustainability of respite services.

Data taken from the National Family Caregivers Association website indicates that in 2004 there were more than 450,000 caregivers in Montana providing over 483 million hours of care-giving a year. Montana has one of the highest numbers of grandparents providing care for grandchildren of any state in the country. Family caregivers are providing 80% of long-term care in the US, a level of care valued at \$306 billion a year, more than is spent on nursing homes and paid home care combined. Most family members take great joy in providing care to their loved ones so that they can remain at home but the physical, emotional, and financial consequences can be overwhelming without support such as respite.

The demonstration grants are providing 4 very different models of respite care services and grant data reflects positive outcomes in the numbers of caregivers receiving respite care. I brought 2 letters from caregivers in Miles City who have have accessed care through DEAP's grant. There is \$300, 000 in the Governor's budget for caregiver support and I urge your approval of this budget request.

In December the President signed The Lifespan Respite Care Act of 2006 into law. This law authorizes \$289 million over five years for state grants to develop Lifespan Respite Programs to help family's access quality, affordable respite care. Lifespan respite programs are defined as "coordinated systems of accessible, community-based respite care services for family caregivers of children and adults with special needs. Once funding is appropriated the lead federal agency will initiate a competitive grant process in early 2008 for states to apply. It's essential that we establish a respite coalition working with all programs of DPHHS that provide respite care services to successfully secure federal grant funding for Montana to develop state and local infrastructure for lifespan respite services that include both planned and emergency respite care services.

Relatively minimal investments in respite help family caregivers provide this care at home and this is the most compassionate and fiscally responsible support of caregivers we can provide. I urge your support of the money in the budget for care giving and for providing sustainability of the current Alzheimer's disease Demonstration Grants by accessing the funds available through the Lifespan Respite Act.

Thank you!

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